

Ex Umbra

The North Carolina Central University
Literary Magazine

Ex Umbra
Rising from the Shadows

Artwork

Short Stories

Essays

Poetry

Fall 1992

Ex Umbra

The North Carolina Central University
Literary Magazine

Fall 1992 Edition

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*Again, thank you all, and this magazine is
dedicated to each and every one of you!*

This magazine is a student publication and does not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of staff and/or faculty of North Carolina Central University.

Editor's Notes

First, we would like to say thank you to all the students who took the initiative to submit their entries for this Fall 1992 edition of *Ex Umbra*. But we can't help but wonder why there were so few entries submitted. We would think that a campus of over 5,000 students would have had us drowning in entries to be published in a once a semester magazine that is compiled and designed by students and sent to alumni nationwide. We received less than 50, that is entries from less than 1% of the student body.

So my next question is why was there so little student interest in the student publications? With so many historical events taking place at NCCU with our new chancellor and recent student protests, in America this election year and violent crimes on the rise, I feel there simply should have been more students interested. Instead of support, excuses ranged from "...it's personal..." to "...ahh man, I'll get it to ya'..." A friend told me once, "Excuses are tools of incompetence used to build monuments of nothingness, those who use them seldom accomplish anything." Where else but at college can you get this hands-on training and experience? There are so many resources at our grasp.

I encourage all of my fellow Eagles at NCCU to get involved and take charge. This is your time!

John A. Riddick, Jr.
Editor, *Ex Umbra* 1992

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ROMANCE



Love

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LOVE AND THE BLACK WOMAN

This is a poem written for black women;
Yes—that means you.
It's all about love and black men like me,
Sharing our love of you.
The L in love is for listening,
No lies should we tell.
The O is for the original women of this earth,
We love and and always love we shall.
The V is for the violets,
We give to you in reality as well as in our dreams.
The E is for eternity,
That's how much we will always care for you it seems.
What I'm trying to say is...
Black women, you have everything a man like me could yearn.
For the black men who don't know how to love a black woman,
It could better the black human race,
If you would only learn.

-Ray H. McCallum

MY LOVE FOR YOU

All I can say
is that the love I have for you will never fade away.
The love I have for you is no lie.
The love I have for you will never die.
The love I have for you will continue when I am gone to my home
on high.
The love I have for you will continue to grow every second,
minute and hour along my way.
The love I have for you no one can ever repay.
The love I have for you will last after my dying day.
The love I have for you will never fade away.

-William L. Williams

FORGET

Forget his name, forget his face
Forget his kiss, his warm embrace
Forget the love that you once knew
Remember now, there's someone new.

Forget the fun that you once shared
Forget the fact that he once cared
Forget the time you spent together
Remember now he's gone forever.

Forget the times they played your song
Forget that you cried all night long
Forget how close you once were
Remember now that he's with her.

Forget the way he used to talk
Forget the way he used to walk
Forget the times he used the phone
Remember now you're all alone.

Forget you ever thought of him
Forget the love you had for him
Forget that he was once your world
Remember now, she's his girl.
Forget his gentle teasing way
Forget you saw him yesterday
Forget the things he used to do
Remember what he's put you through.

Forget the thrills when he walked by
Forget the times he made you cry
Forget the way he spoke your name
Remember now it makes you sad
Forget the love that once was great
Remember now it's turned to hate.

-Yolanda Alexander

THE LOVE OF A SISTA

I don't know why I care for you
I don't know if I should
But I love my black man
Like no other woman could

I share with you your troubles
I share your good times too
Every time you need me
Homegirl is there for you

I remember the sweet hellos
I remember the sad good-byes
You never say how much you care
But I see it in your eyes

I will keep this love together
I will care with all my heart
For as long as we share true feelings
Our love will never part

I don't know why I care for you
I didn't know if I should
But I love my black man
Like no other woman could.

-Erika L. Knight

WHAT IS THICKER THAN BLOOD?

In everyone's life there is the transition from childhood to adulthood. More often than not, this transformation is triggered by a certain traumatizing event. I can remember such an event in my life, that marked a great change. My metamorphosis from a girl to a woman. This was the end of my innocence, my ultimate awakening.

R-I-N-G!

I sat, waiting frantically for a voice to pick up the phone.

R-I-N-G!

With every passing ring the air was being pressed from my body. Then out of nowhere I heard, "Hello!" All of a sudden, hanging up became the only option available to me. Upon doing this something controlled my hands. I pushed redial and the same voice picked-up. Nervously, "I'm your daughter, Patrice," rushed out.

Physically shaking and mentally distressed, I waited for a reply. I expected something like: "Liar!" followed by a click. Or maybe a, "I don't have anything to say to you!" My imagination was tossing out so many ideas that I almost missed what he say.

"Hello, Patrice, how are you?"

It was as though we were acquaintances. How could he be so calm, so distant, so damned indifferent. Suddenly, the nervousness turned into disgust. All the questions that I'd spent so many nights pondering over were now completely unimportant. This man that supplied half of my chromosomes was unimportant.

How could I have been so stupid? I remember asking my Mom, "Momma, why doesn't my real father want to have anything to do with me?" She said in an extremely loving tone that my father cared, but that he was not mature enough for the responsibility.

For years, I wondered about my real father. At times, I even felt sorry for this man. Regardless of how unexpected I was, I could not imagine how any parent could live without even a small part of his child's life.

But, the wondering was finally over. The monster that haunted my thoughts at night, with all the possibilities of what a

life with both of my real parents could be like, was on the other end of the phone. I don't remember any more of the conversation, and in a lot of ways, that's good. Foremost, because from the beginning of the conversation, it was evident that there was a man on the phone who felt no connection to me.

I hung up the phone feeling drained and totally worthless. Although it was only around seven, I fell into deep sleep that lasted until morning. With the sunrise rose a new Patrice, a different Patrice, and a grateful Patrice.

It was a long time before I was able to tell my mother and stepfather about what happened. However, from that point on I had only one daddy, the man who raised me before the time that I even knew that there was a me. I've always heard that blood is thicker than water, but what's thicker than blood? Emotions are! Caring, loving, supporting, and cherishing are far more important than any physical tie. That's why my daddy is far more important to me than any other man on this planet, or any other. The bond between me and that other man stopped the second his sperm reached my mother's egg.

-Kenita Patrice Dye

FALLING INLOVE
(THE TEST OF TIME)

It started with the gentleness of your voice,
A smile that could bring the sun out, and
A personality to match.
With each meeting, I found myself more and more attracted to you,
caring for you without trying.
Every hello, glance and touch
Pulling me into the gravity of your spirit.
I knew I was falling inlove.
There was something in your spirit
That made me believe you cared.
I just didn't know how much, and in what way.
This made me afraid not knowing
If you were going the same direction.
I didn't want to be far in front of you.
The time came when I knew I had to tell you my feelings,
Or see you totally walk out of my life
Without ever knowing how I felt.
All the fears inside me,
was not as powerful as the love I felt for you.
I felt my love was worth the risk of facing my fears.
That first night when I told you how I felt, and
You later held me in your arms,
I felt the earth move and as we kissed—
I felt uncontrollable energy that had been locked up from you
Being released, and yet by now your life had become so full of
Complications it prevented you from totally releasing
All that was inside for me.
Those complication put my feelings to the test.
The complications didn't affect my feelings,
For they had nothing to do with what was in my heart.
I love you for you,
Not for the things that were going on in your life.
Maybe for someone else who didn't love you the way I did,
It may have made a difference.
Besides that was our decision
To make those complications impacted more on you than I.
Time went on, we kept in touch thru

All the complex conditions in your life,
And as time went on
I found myself steadily falling deeper and deeper inlove with you,
and
Yet you've never told me that you loved me, only that you cared,
But somehow even though the words were never spoken,
Whenever we were together, I felt your love and
Somehow the rest didn't seem to matter.
For I always felt so much joy and happiness when I was with you.
I knew one day that I may have to give you up because
Of those complications, and how they affected you.
Then it happened one night to my surprise,
As we tenderly kissed and the passions were being unleashed,
I felt for the first time you totally released what had been locked up
For so long inside for me.
So full of joy, excitement, and wonderment as to what really caused
The unleashing of your love,
I knew that in time and when you were ready I would find out.
I knew now that what I thought you felt was real and
Not a part of my imagination.
Then you told me some of those complication were now removed.
So much joy inside from the news.
I knew now that as time went on
There should be nothing that could prevent you from loving me
more. I only had to be patient and wait for the day
When our unspoken words became spoken, and
Our hearts could overflow freely to no end.
I know now beyond a doubt that my love for you is endless,
And that real love does stand the test of time.
-Sandra Gwen Johnson Theard

THE NIGHT MY CHILD WAS BORN

The night my child was born, the angels sang above,
What a great gift from God to show us his love.
The night my child was born, my heart was filled with pride,
I knew then at that moment, that God was by my side.

The night my child was born, my wife's face was a glow,
I could see it in her eyes, I knew she loved me so.
The night my child was born, I thought about my life.
I thought about my troubles, I thought about my strife.
I thought about her life, and the things that must come to be,
yet knowing in my heart I would have to wait and see.
It really doesn't matter the things that come to pass.
My love for God, mother, and child will forever last.

The night my child was born, there couldn't have been a happier
man.

I looked at her face. I held her tiny hand.
I knew that tomorrow would bring a brighter morn.
I know the true meaning of love, because my child was born.

-Grover L. Thomas

LOOKING FOR GRAY EYES

Mama when I grow up I'm gonna love\I'm gonna love
because you loved me so much\I remember Mama. You
would say, "A kiss and a peck, then hug around the neck"\

I could never forget your love\ Telling me all my life,

Kerrie, "you gotta always love cause you are made of
love!"\ God's love child, full of his grace and mercy\And
Mama, even though daddy couldn't love me, I don't hold it
against him\ I am nobody's cross to bear, my birth was
blessing\So Mama, I am grown up and I love Daddy and
he don't have to love me back.

-Kerrie McKinney

HUNGRY

Hunger is what I feel. Hungry for your time
Hungry for your love. Hungry for your mind.
Hungry for your soul, may it be mine and mine alone;
Hungry for the house that temporarily God made your home.
Hungry for your smile. Hungry for your tears;
Hungry for your goals. Hungry for your fears;
Hungry for your flaws, whatever they may be;
Hungry for us. Hungry for U and me.

-Alonzo A. Morrow II

CAUGHT UP

I say that to say this.
Is this not my love,
or my love that I miss?
Am I the object of her desire, or am I just cute?
Should I chance a confrontation,
and commence a dispute?
Caught Up

The burning question still remains,
Is this for real
or are we playing games?
She loves another, this is true.
But we are fanning the fire,
in this romantic brew.
Caught Up

So are we together or are we apart?
I cannot get you out of my mind,
but am I out of your heart?
Tell me now, my emotions are struck...
My heart is in the balance, because with you,
I am caught up!

-John A. Riddick, Jr.

MY LOVE IS TRUE

God in Heaven up above
made you for me to love
He picked you out from all the rest
because he knew I'd love you best.

I had a heart and it was true
but now it's gone from me to you.
Take good care of it as I have done
for you have two and I have none.

If I reach Heaven and you're not there
I'll carve your name along the golden stairs
For all the angels to know and see
just how much you mean to me.

If you're not there on Judgment Day
I'll know you went the other way.
And just to show my love is true—
I'll go through hell to be with you.

-Yolanda Alexander

This poem is dedicated to Paul E. Bennett II

TOGETHER

Today I come to you in the presence of God
and this company to vow my love and devotion,
To confess my love for you with the respect
of God and his blessing, that our life will
be one of love from the heart, and soul,
that will last an eternity.
That with God's love we will be as one together,
walk thru all darkness together,
to come to the light together.
To see the sunshine together.
For if a star should fall,
together we will catch it.

-Sandra Gwen Johnson Theard

YOU THAT I MISS

Remember when we were last together?
Of that I too reminisce.
Holding you close, it is you that I miss.

My thoughts I share,
because you are there.
The prelude to a kiss,
it is you that I miss.

I close my eyes & you are what I see.
Instead of calling, what if you were here with me.
Alone without you, I am in eternal bliss,
Simply because it is you that I miss!

-John A. Riddick, Jr.

BOYS

A heart is not a play thing
a heart is not a toy
but if you want it broken
just give it to boy.

Boys like to play with things
to C what makes them run
But when it comes to making love
they do it just 4 fun.

Boys never give their hearts away
they play the girls 4 fools
They wait around 'til you give in
and they play it cool.

You'll wonder where he is at night
you'll wonder if he's true
One moment U R happy
the next you are blue.

When U C him
your heart begins 2 dance
your world revolves around him
There's nothing like romance.

When it stops you don't know why
You worry day and night
You C, my friend, you're losing him
it never turns out right.

Love is fine, but hurts so much
the price U pay is high
If the choice is love or death
I think I'd rather die.

Don't fall in love, my friend
you'll find it doesn't pay—
it causes so many broken hearts
it happens every day.

My! I'm very sorry
I hope you understand
but when I fell in love with you
I thought you were a man.

-Yolanda Alexander

CHANGES IN PERCEPTION

The days in a year race by so quickly. Seasons complete their cycle continuously and the world is steadily changing, but each of us is too busy to take notice. How soon something can be taken away from us before we have a chance to fully appreciate it. How soon love can be taken away from us before we have a chance to fully appreciate it. In the words of Shakespeare, "It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all." The loss of love will also widen our perception of life and help us to appreciate love even more.

Since the passing of my mother, I have constantly been aware of how love is lost. A simple touch is gone. A warming smile is lost. A dear friend has departed. In the presence of this friend everyday, the simple definition of her actions were vague. But now that these actions are lost, a real sense of appreciation can be obtained. I have had the love of a mother and I know what it is like to be loved. So many others have not been as fortunate as I, to have had a mother's touch, a mother's smile and a mother's friendship. Although this love is lost, I am truly blessed to have had this love in my life. For with that love, I know what love is and how to love others.

How absurd it may be to say that such a simple emotion such as love can change the perception of a person's life. It is not absurd, it is quite beneficial. For you see the loss of love has made me realize how precious love is and how soon it can be lost.

-Edye Lewis

THE MORNING AFTER

Last night we made love for the very first time
We felt each other heart beat, we read each other mind
Now it's the morning after, and I wonder if things have changed
If you are still in love with me, if your heart still feels the same
It's the morning after, and my love has changed to fear
Because now I have to wonder if your love is far or near
Even though it's the morning after, I refuse to forget last night.

I can't forget the way it felt, just to hold you tight
They say that love can change a man, and I would not believe it true.
But I must confess to change after I spent that night with you.

My love, it's the morning after, and this is how I feel
I wish I could take you back to bed, because my love is real.

It's the morning after, and the sun comes up above
My feelings remain unchanged, my heart is full of love
So my love, it's the morning after, and I am in love and feeling great
And if the morning can be this good, then for tonight I can hardly wait.

-Alejandro V. Ellis



Heritage

Writers Featured

Shuan Boykin

Kevin Flythe

Rhonda Reese

Phyllis Jeffers

Gerald Nesmith

Alejandro V. Ellis

LOSING A LOVED ONE

Losing a loved one is an experience that can really take a toll on a person's life. Such a loss makes it hard to face the reality of life itself. An experience like this can change one's whole perspective on life, and it can make a person realize the true value of life. The loss of my father helped me realize some of the different perspectives of life. My father's guidance, his hard work, and his being a true provider are three guidelines that I have used to make my life better as a productive young man in this difficult world.

My father died on September 21, 1991. He had a heart attack while he was at work. The moment I found out, I was in shock, and I really did not know what to do or say. My father was my idol, and I could not believe that he was dead.

Dad was the one who pushed me to do my best and to work hard in school or whatever I intended to do in my life. He had high hopes for my future. His dreams were to send me to college and for me to become a successful individual in this hard-hearted world. All he wanted me to do was to learn and do more than he had ever learned or done.

My dad was a truly hard worker. Sometimes, I thought work was all he knew how to do. He was a craftsman, and he believed in getting the job done when it needed to be done. I know about getting the job done, because sometimes I thought he was trying to work both of us to death. After a while, I realized that he was teaching me a lesson on how to survive in this world, because he knew that he was not going to always be there to do the things that needed to be done.

My father was truly a provider for my mother and me. Sure he cared about himself, but we were his two main priorities. He worked himself to death in order to make our lives easier, and to try to make sure that I got my education. These actions of my father were the signs of a dedicated man, but now, they can only be a memory, because the Lord has taken him away.

Now, my mother and I only have each other, and I have to take his place as the man of the house. It is obvious to me that I can not do all of the things that he did or be a great provider like he was, but I can be a man, and do a majority of

the tasks that have to be done. My father's death brought me into manhood at the age of seventeen, which was an early age for someone to have a heavy load dropped on his or her shoulders. But, I have realized that I must overcome the odds, and try to make the best of my life, because now it is evident to me that neither a long or profitable life is promised to anyone.

I have matured a great deal this past year, and I have developed a level of understanding of life that only an adult seems to comprehend. Also, I have developed the attitude that I must overcome the obstacles in my way, and never give up on my dreams and goals in life. I keep the words that my dad used to say to me in my mind at all times now, and they are "Son, never give up on what you believe in, and always strive for the best, because if you do not do it for yourself then no one else will do it for you. Life is what you make." I have found a great value in these words, and I am determined to make my life the best it can possibly be. Therefore, I have suffered a major loss in my life, but I have used the memories of what my dad stood for as a stepping stone to a more successful future in life and manhood.

-Kevin D. Flythe

GIRL CHILD
by Rhonda Reese

"Girl where you goin? Did I say you could leave this house? Did you clean that kitchen, I want that kitchen clean before you go anywhere."

"Yes mama I cleaned the kitchen. I'm goin down the street I'll be back in a little while."

"That kitchen had better be clean. You had better not be goin back there in those projects playing with those hoodlums. Don't let me catch you back there girl I'll whip all the black off of you. And you will be back here before dark. Don't let me see the street lights come on and you ain't in the house!"

That was Mrs. Hattie A Watts, my mother. When she gets in one of her moods girlfriend is no joke. And me you ask. Who am I? My name is Kimberly B. Watts, the B. stands for Benita but I just say B. cause it sounds more sophisticated. I am 12 years old and I'm in the seventh grade. And I am real smart. So smart that one day I'm going to be so rich and so famous that I'll have anything that I want. I'll have the world if I want it.

This is my street, Cedar St. Ain't nothin to do on this street don't nobody live here but old people except for the Johnson kids next door. But chile they so tired they work my nerves and I just can't stand it. Danny don't wanna do nothin but eat and watch t.v. and Timmy always want to play them games where he be touchin all on me and stuff. Tiffany would be alright if she didn't whine all the time. She always wanna play with them damn dolls of hers. I told her to get out of my face with them thangs. I don't feel like being bothered with them today.

I got to sneak past they crazy dog and nosy mama to get back there across the fence though. Lawd if my mama catch me goin back here she'll kill me for sure. The last time that crazy dog made so much noise Mrs. Johnson came to the window and saw me. That nosy bitch called my mama and spilled her guts. I'll never forget that whippin. Just cause don't nobody want to play with her lil nasty kids don't mean she got to be all in my business.

Made it. Stupid dog, throw him a bone and he shuts up. I wonder what Tysha is doin she probably got her lazy ass in front of the T.V.

"Hello Miss Grant is Tysha here?"

"No Tysha ain't here. She gone to da sto wit Pooky. She'll

be back in a lil while."

"Okay. Can you tell her I came by?"

"Yeah. Leroy get yo ass off my table like dat boy! How many times I got to tell you. Hard headed dats what you are, jus hard headed! Can't have nice things in my own house cause of hard headed kids! Go outside somewhere boy!"

That was Tysha's mama. She got eight kids and sit at home all day. Tysha say she hurt her back and now they pay her stay home. I heard my mama and Mrs. Johnson say that she is just lazy and she ain't doin nothin but laying up makin more babies. That's why my mama don't allow me to play with Tysha because she said all of those kids was half raised. That might be true but Tysha still one of my best friends anyway. It ain't her fault what her mama does. My mama just don't understand that. Like she thinks everybody back here is bad just because they live back here. That is not true, a lot of these people are nice. I like it back here, there is always somebody to play with. There go Lisa and Tymeke.

"What's up. What yaul doin?"

"Nuthin. Ain't nuthin to do. I don't know where everybody at. It ain't nothin but three thirty. How much money you got Tymeke? Lets walk up to Miss Sellars store and get some candy."

"I ain't got no damn money girl. What I look like a damn bank? Besides I don't feel like walking all the way up there. What you doin back here anyway Kim? Yo mama gonna whip dat ass if she catch you. You betta go back on Cedar St. and play wit them nuts at da Johnson house. Ain't that right Lisa."

"You right girl. They are a trip. You had better run along now Kim."

"Aw, fuck yaul. It ain't all of that I can go home. I didn't have to come back here to see yo tired asses anyway."

"Aw girl slow down we jus playin wit you damn. You such a big baby sometime."

"Let's go over to the court and play some horse."

"Now Kim where we supposed to get a ball from. We can't play nuthin without no ball."

"Tymeke, where Stank at? He said we could use his ball."

"Girl dumb ass can't come out. He got caught up in Treva's house yesterday. Didn't you hear? Her mama came home from work early and they got cold busted. Girl I hear he

was trying to get out the bathroom window wit his pants half way down. I wish I woulda seen it. Ha mama pulled his dumb ass back in da house and was goin off. I heard his mama beat da shit out of him when she got home. And Treva ain't nothin but a ole ho anyway. She dun gave it up to almost every guy back here."

"Damn that's fucked up. I didn't even know they was talkin."

"They wasn't. I told you Treva ain't nothin but a ho. I can't stand that bitch."

"They so stupid. They didn't hear ha mama at da door?"

"I guess not Lisa, otherwise they wouldn't have got caught now would they."

"Well me and Mike almost got caught one time and it scared the shit out of me. My daddy came home and Mike had to run out da back door girl."

"Lawd, I wish I coulda seen Stank's fat ass hangin out dat bathroom window."

"Look aint dat Titus, Marcus and Jeff over there?"

"Yeah, lets go see what they doin. Come on Kim!"

"Okay, I'm comin."

Oh God I can't stand Titus. His mama used to keep me when I was little. And I used to have to stay at his house during the day. He used to make me play those games with him like Tim wanna play. He used to make me take my pants off so he could look at me and touch on me. One time I told him no and he punched me in the eye real hard. He made me touch him once and I hated him for that. It was so nasty. He told me if I told his mama or my mama that he would do more than punch me next time. How could I tell mama anyway. What would I say I had let him do it. I hate Titus Taylor.

"Hey girl why you movin so slow. You always move so damn slow. What's yo problem?"

"Aw, leave Kim alone Titus. Don't nobody want to hear your shit today."

"Girl you had better respect yo elders. I'll kick yo ass up in here. You hear me girl?"

"Boy you better get out of my face. Elder my ass you every bit of fifteen years old which ain't shit Titus Taylor."

"Tymeka shut up."

"You shut up Jeff. Aint nobody even said nuttin to yo tired ass. When I want you to say somethin I'll let you know

okay?"

"Jus step off lil girl fore I have to hurt you. Jus step off." Jeff looked at Tymekeka and pushed her away.

"What yaul doin'?"

"Oh now you want to get smart wit me now Marcus. Don't make me start on you."

"Well go ahead, I started on yo mama last night." Titus said with a wide grin. He was always startin somethin.

Tymekeka was pissed now.

"Boy don't you be talkin bout my mama. If you wanna talk lets talk about the fact that I seen you daddy on comin out of the liquor house last night."

"What da hell you laughin at Kim? Where yo Daddy at? You don't even know where yo daddy at. I know you ain't laughin. Yo daddy don't even come see you. At least I know where my Daddy is."

"Fuck you Titus!"

"That was fucked up Titus. That was real fucked up."

"Well shit Tymekeka she ain't have no business laughin at me. I can't help the truth. Shouldn't be such a baby. Come on fellas lets leave these babies. We got things to do."

"Yeah right, bye Titus. Girl don't even let him get to you. He so damn stupid. I don't know why you be lettin Titus talk to you like that. You act like you scared of him or somethin. Girl you had betta get him straight. Just cuss him out one good time and he'll leave you alone."

"Hey lets go over to the park and fuck wit ole man Wilson."

"Naw it's too late. It's almost dark he probably gone by now."

"Oh shit, I got to get home before it gets dark? My mama is gonna kick my ass. I'll see yaul tomorrow."

"Alright girl see ya."

"Bye"

"Kim is that you. Your dinner is in there on the stove. Wash your hands and eat. Where have you been all this time?"

"Nowhere."

THE END

A THIN LINE

I smirk when I hear their frolicking laughter.
Their untainted innocence; their unsoiled naivete.

I grimace.

I recall how soon their day will come.
Their innocence lost, their joys far and few between.

I wonder will they feel bitter and angry?
Hurt and confused?

Hold on children.
Hold on to your youth.
Remain simple and happy.

For as you age you will become a victim of circumstance
a fool of persuasion
oppressed by ignorance.
tainted by lust and passion.
and hurt by love.

-Phyllis Jeffers

SONG FOR MY FATHERS

Black Men

 distraught by life's anxieties
powerless in a world of self-complications
 aborted from tomorrow's dreams.
Must never digress from times
 they stood faithful in unity with their race.
Society has built barriers
 in many ways to obstruct them,
Yet they overcome,
 relish their accomplishments
praise their forefathers
 For they pardon the perpetrators.
Together they have built yesterday,
 although time has taken it away,
tomorrow may never be,
 they must hold on to today.

-Gerald Nesmith

THE FAMILY

Nothing is more important than a person's family
Nothing better to have, or a better place to be
Family means so much in the things they do and say
Family is there, anytime and anyday.
Yes, Family is important, and in life it plays a part
Family will support you, and always give their best
Family will support you when life is gloomy and dim
Family will let you know, that you can count on them
No matter what the problem, or what the situation may be
Someone is there for you, and they are your Family
So to me, it means that Family are relatives and friends
Or people who stick by you through the thick and the thin
Family is God's support system that he placed upon this earth
Family is a gift to you from the moment of your birth.
God opened the door, and then gave us the key
He gave us something wonderful, when he gave the Family
His single gift is a shelter through life's many storms
A pillow when we need a cushion, a blanket to keep us warm
He gave us something special, and it is an inspiration to me
And that precious gift, is our Family.

-Alejandro V. Ellis



Ideology

Writers Featured

Mont McMillan

Jack Jones

Phyllis Jeffers

Shaundell Satterfield

John A. Riddick, Jr.

Russell Robinson

Cebele Roy

GeGe Grier

Iris Gail

Pamela Ferguson

LET'S BE LIKE GOD AND CREATE

Let's all be like God and create. Let's go create some peace by breaking fights up in the streets. Let's go create quiet by enforcing an eleven o'clock curfew on the whole city of Durham. Let's all create tranquility by shutting down the power plants and incinerators for just one hour. Let's all listen attentively to the rolling of the rivers and the rushing of the reservoir.

Let's all create knowledge and enlightenment by banning the nintendos and bringing Dr. Seuss back from the grave. We can give the children an escape from the darkness of violence and ignorance. Let's give them the Irish, African, and Swedish stories for our backgrounds. Let's shed some light on what's really important. After all, God said "Let there be light."

What do you think God is saying when he looks at all the garbage. He might be saying, "Man do I have to create everything?" I made them in my own image, I gave them my own mind. If they just sit and think for awhile and then put their thoughts to use then somehow, some way, somebody will create a better environment for student to learn in.

So if any man considers himself slightly religious, I challenge him to create a more kept environment for himself, yourself, and myself. Let's not wait for Jesus to come down to pick up trash. We can clean up the yard ourselves. Be Christ-like and create!

-Jack Jones

BLASPHEMY

I know know nothing of Moses
Yet, I scream, "Pharaoh,
Let my People go."

Remove the taunting shackles of racism,
the bonds of oppression.

I know nothing of Jesus
Yet, I tread to cavalry for my people's salvation.
I wait for Easter-
For the resurrection of our greatness.

I know nothing of Job or Noah.
I have no patience.
no faith.

Just a desire-a desire for change-a desire for freedom.

-Phyllis Jeffers

SLAVERY OF THE MIND

A few days ago I was sitting at my desk contemplating what I could write about that dealt with the evolution of slavery. Then the idea hit me that maybe we are slaves of ourselves. That maybe if it weren't for the limitations we set for ourselves we would be able to live up to our full potential. Now I know this isn't the first time that someone has written about this topic, but it is the first time I've written about it, so I'm going to speak my mind.

First of all, I don't understand why we as African-Americans get excited when one of us achieves what we already should be doing anyway. For example, when my younger brother succeeded to be in the top five percent of his class, my family got all hyped about it. Now why is that? Because you rarely find young African-Americans doing that well. Then the question arises why aren't there more African-Americans doing that well? Why shouldn't we be in the top five percent of anything? Because we have been made to believe that no matter what we do, we will always be struggling to be where we rightfully belong - at the top.

By now you're probably saying "What does that have to do with being slaves of our own mind?" I'll tell you. We don't achieve because we believe in our own minds that we can't achieve. Although our parent have told us numerous times that we can be what we want to be, and do whatever we want to do, we always seem to sell ourselves short.

Secondly, I don't understand why we continuously doubt ourselves. Since I've been here, I've heard at least twenty different people tell themselves "I'm going to flunk this quiz" or "I'm going to flunk this test." Even I've said it - who hasn't? Now of course we're going to fail if we don't study, but if we are prepared and we know the material, what's there to worry about? We (notice I said we) have to learn to stop doubting ourselves and start believing we CAN DO instead of we CAN'T DO.

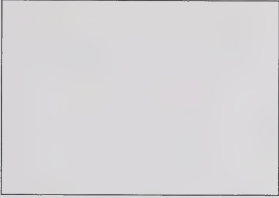
Mentally we bind ourselves in chains and go as far as we are EXPECTED to go and stop. It's great that we have doctors, lawyers, businessmen, and businesswomen, but why stop there? Now that we have broken the chain of human slavery, don't you think it's time to break the chain that binds our minds? Don't you think it's time to break the chain that hinders us from being all that we can be? Don't you think it's time for us to prove to OURSELVES that we can be superior-that we ARE superior? DON'T YOU THINK

-Shaundell Satterfield

Hey all you cross-burners! It's time for something new. Stop being so blatant in displaying your prejudices. Subscribe to the new improved racism...Utilize your resources to get guns and drugs to this country, then "conveniently" put them in the "ghettos". Then you can sit back and watch them coloreds kill themselves. Let them take the time, trouble and legalities off your hands.

For years, we the oppressors have been trying to clear them jigaboos off the face of the earth by lynching at rate of one every 72 hours for the last 400 years. They are the damnedest 12 percent in our America to get rid of. Dang, we put liquor stores on every corner, depreciate their land, drug them, keep them on welfare and force some to live in dirty little housing projects. Maybe we should do somethin' like the Tuskegee experiment again.

Now folks I'm asking you, fellow narrow-minded racists to band together and help your statesman pass laws like that reverse discrimination bill. Hell, we own everthing anyway, 'least all that them Japanese ain't bought. Let's continue to wean them minorities on television and take their hard-earned 40 acres and the damn mule. Be patient, they are on their way. This here AIDS thing'll kill off a few hundred thousand. Don't forget the "drug epidemic", that'll rid us off a few thousand. At 6:00pm turn on the news and place your bets on the latest death tolls on that thar black on black crime (he, he), they kill more of themselves than we do, ain't it just dandy. The rest will either try to be like us around their friends, or rot in jail. Hey get this, if you get real anxious, then just shoot a couple an' say he looked suspicious (that'll getcha off). Don't thay all look suspicious anyhow?



Ray C. Ist
Editor, *The Oppressor*

-Your Editor

Ray C. Ist

UNTITLED

I stand alone in a dimly lit hallway.

As I walk, the echoes of my shoes haunt my every step.

I turn to my right and push open a green door.

Inside I hear the screams of labor leading to life.

From there I turn in the opposite direction and twist the knob to another port, this one a warm yellow hue.

With just a hint of a push, I'm able to see a brown man and a brown boy throwing a pigskin. The lad drops the ball but the adult male laughs as he pats the boy on the head and picks him up with warmth and solitude I'm being pulled by a demonic spirit.

Going further down the hall I hear screams again, not screams of the labor of love, but chaotic ear bursting pain.

The voices are from two, a man and a woman.

Curiosity leads me to track the noise, but I'm led to another door, this one is blue. With much effort I push open the door to see the same brown woman I saw earlier. As soon as I enter the chamber I'm struck dumb when I witness the brown man slap the brown woman to the point where she is knocked to her knees. I look to the little boy and see that he too is as equally dumfounded.

Before I can even get any air to utter a word the door slams shut.

On down the corridor the hall way gets lighter and I see a series of doors in a variety of different colors and textures.

Puzzled and somewhat miffed I choose a door at random. A white ivory door strikes my attention so I enter. The brown boy whom I saw earlier is circled by other children his own age. Some of the children are brown and some are pink.

Those that are brown taunt by saying to the boy that he is not brown by their definition. The pink children join in by announcing the boy isn't pink and definitely is not brown by their definitions and handed down descriptions.

As the taunting continued I slam the door in anger.

A black mahogany door is adjacent to the white. This door opens by itself. Pushed by a force I beyond explanation, I find myself in a hospital room. Grief is in the air. Sounds of tears, a heart monitor, and a respirator terrorize the occupants,

myself included. I look in the hospital bed and see the brown man whom I have seen all through this journey. He's wired from head to toe. I then see the brown boy come from a group of other brown people. He appears to be older and a bit more mature. The two hold each other's hand for what appears to be the last time. The heart monitor beeps, beep, beep, beep, beep, beeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeep. The monitor goes flatline, shrieks of horror crowd the room then they all stop when a brown man puts a sheet over the corpse. From the death of one man a new brown man is born.

The same mystical force that brought me through that door pulled me out that door. I turn and look for one last time and the new brown man closes the door calmly.

The parallel door is made of plastic and is colored red. Before I attempt to open the door, I'm stopped by more screams made by that again of a man and a woman. Not screams of pain or anguish, but screams of passion and pleasure. Modestly I skip this door and find myself at it's neighbor. This door has the same texture is colored blue. I hear screams again but this time of only one, over a beautiful brown woman his same age. I quickly close the door. Going down the last corridor light gets brighter and a series of doors, all made of glass, open as I walk by them. Some are filled with riches, some with regret, some with pleasure., some pain. Then I'm faced with that blinding light. I shield my eyes to see another door. This one is made of steel. I try to open it but when I touch it, the door is hot. The door opens itself and a gust of wind meets me almost knocking me down. Inside I see.....?

-Russell Robinson

SLAP

I FORGIVE YOU

SLAP

I FORGIVE YOU

SLAP

I FORGIVE MYSELF FOR
LETTING YOU KEEP ME
IN BONDAGE UNDER
FEAR AND ABUSE

-Cebele Roy

THE NIGHT THE FOREST CRIED

The sun was singing so beautiful through the trees
When a storm eroded from the sky
The sun that lit the trees so beautifully
Became the rain that feel upon the trees
But the storm flashed so instantly through nature's beauty
For months, trees lie down in fright of another storm
Out of the darkness, again came the sun
And the tears of the trees are never to be expected.

-Iris Gail

WHAT'S WORSE?

You tell me what's worse.
Committing the crime...
or getting caught!
-John A. Riddick, Jr.

LIFE

The death of my friend, Eric Anthony, changed my perception of life.

The day I found out Eric was dead was no different than any other school day. I had arrived at school early so that I could complete my advanced credit for choir. I was in the midst of filing my last piece of music when my instructor walked into my office.

We exchanged good mornings and then she asked me a question that I thought was very odd.

"Did you know Eric Anthony?"

"Yes, I know him."

"He died in a car accident last night."

It is hard to describe what I felt at that moment, because I felt nothing. My instructor's words filled the air, the room, and my head. I could not talk, I could not hear, I could not speak. For that one moment in time I was non-existent.

That feeling of emptiness stayed with me for the rest of the day, and will always be somewhat prevalent in me. Although I have accepted his death, I could never accept the loss of someone so dear to me. His memory will be forever fresh in my heart and mind.

The loss of such a good friend made me realize the true values of life and how quickly it can be snatched away.

-Shaundell Satterfield

We shall over come...come...
into a life...come...into being...
Denied the right to come...
into a life.

Mommy Mommy push me back in
You know they don't want me here.

Spirit...presence...space...mass...
area...

I don't want to be here! No one will let me be..become to come. I
can't!
Nothing! Dying while I can still breathe.
I see the light...but they won't let me see it. I can crawl around...but
they won't let me walk...so I sit.

Power...education...

Learning what they want me to learn...
so that I can, but they won't let me.

Sunk...deprived...pushed...

But!

I'm still here. Breathing the only air
allowed and no more.

But I still exist. I can't die.
Why!
Love...pride...perseverance...

This is what kept me here. So now I lay the foundation for a new!...

I came...bitter then...better now...

for my body will conceive...

A being will be born, But never will he mourn for I laid the
foundation...for hope.

-GeGe Grier

JUNE 17, 1991

Lord please help me to start my career\almighty I give all I have to you\I ask that you use me as a tool\an expression of your unconditional love and grace\open up my soul and help to search my deep, mysterious past\give me the courage to speak the truth\even express the pain\grant me the strength my ancestors possessed\through you mercy\awaken my senses that have been dulled by ignorance of my "true" heritage\I strive to be useful and original\my goal is to fulfill your purpose\and perfect my inspiration\just continue to lead me in the light.\I thank you for all you are doing and have done\bless the world\amen

-K. McKinney



Did you like what you just witnessed
in this

STUDENT publication?

Was it "all that and a bag of chips?"
Don't you wish you would have been
in it? Well, it's not too early to start
sending entries for the

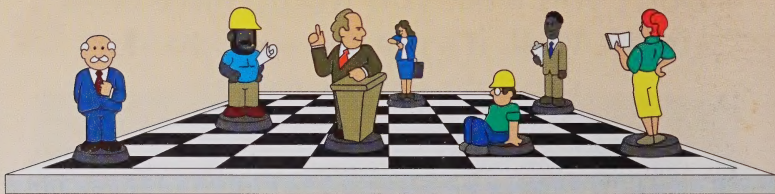
Spring 1993 Edition
of Ex Umbra!!

See you next semester...
Same Eagle time,
Same Eagle place!



Eric, Cebele, Kerrie, David, Valerie, Vanessa
and Johnie!!!

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